

Summer State Hazard Mitigation Council Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Delaware Emergency Management Agency
July 10, 2019

Welcome and Introductions

Damaris Schweers, State Hazard Mitigation Officer, opened the meeting at 9:00am by introducing herself and thanking those in attendance. Damaris went through the agenda and then requested that attendees introduce themselves and their areas of responsibility. Damaris then turned the floor over to Mitigation Project Officer Loren Reed for an overview of the open mitigation projects DEMA is managing.

Review of Hazard Mitigation Projects

Loren briefly reviewed the three types of Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant programs; the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program (PDM), and the Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program (FMA), and their eligibility requirements. She then briefed on the status of all open HMA projects as well as project applications that were selected for further review by FEMA in the 2018 PDM and FMA grant cycle. Additionally, Loren provided a status update on the open Strategic Opportunity for Adaptation (SOFA) grant that was awarded to DEMA by DNREC's Division of Climate and Energy.

Updated HMA Application Ranking Criteria

Damaris went over the application prioritization process that is used to rank HMA applications that the State submits to FEMA. She discussed the issue of the previous criteria that was used not accounting for newly introduced project types and focusing on the mitigation of single properties. She then went through the new criteria that had been developed by a sub-committee of the State Hazard Mitigation Council called the State Hazard Mitigation Council Policy Group.

Application Review Team

Damaris introduced the idea of forming an HMA application review team. The idea behind this is a team of representatives from different subject matter areas to assist in the review of applications. DEMA will still complete their normal review process, but other members will review based on their specific areas of expertise. She asked for anyone who was interested to reach out to the mitigation team at DEMA.

Hazard Mitigation Planning

Damaris reported that the update of the State All Hazards Mitigation Plan was approved by FEMA in August of 2018 and is available online at dema.delaware.gov. She then mentioned the startup of Mitigation Action Working Groups and that DEMA was considering pursuing "Enhanced" status for the next update of the Plan. Damaris then turned things over to each county for a brief update of where they were at with their Plans.

- New Castle County (Dave Carpenter): Plan expires in June of 2020. Their application for funding for their next update was selected by FEMA under PDM, however they are concerned that if they wait for funds to be awarded they will not be able to complete the update by the deadline. They are currently considering other funding sources.

- Kent County (Colin Faulkner): Plan expires in November 2020. Their application for funding for their next update was also selected by FEMA under PDM, but they share New Castle County's concern about the tight timeframe for the update.
- Sussex County (Joe Thomas): Plan expires in April 2022. In order to avoid the timeframe limitations that New Castle and Kent counties are facing, Sussex County is preparing to submit an application for funding for their next update under the 2019 PDM grant cycle.

Mitigation Action Working Groups

Loren went over the Mitigation Action Working Groups she started earlier this year. She introduced the four different groups, the Infrastructure, Resiliency, Outreach/Partnerships, and DEMA Priorities working groups. She also went over some of the issues identified with mitigation actions previously identified in the State Hazard Mitigation Plan and efforts to remedy those issues. Loren then showed some examples of mitigation actions and their current status. She closed with some steps she identified for the groups to take moving forward, including meeting twice a year, County emergency manager involvement, and floodplain manager involvement.

Upcoming Events

Upcoming mitigation and resiliency related events were reported on:

- 7/31: Pre-Letter of Final Determination Workshop in NCC
- 8/7, 8/8: PDM/FMA Grant Briefings in NCC, KC, & SC
- 8/13-14: Substantial Damage Estimator Training
- 8/15: DE Flood Insurance Roundtable
- 9/5: Emergency Planning Workshop for Older Adults
- 11/15: RASCL Summit

FEMA Coffee Breaks

Damaris put in a plug for the Mitigation Coffee Breaks that FEMA provides every other month. These webinars are for those interested in reducing risk in their communities and provide mitigation best practices at all levels of government.

Staff Changes

Dave Warga introduced himself as the new State Floodplain Manager and National Flood Insurance Coordinator at DNREC, replacing Greg Williams.

Gina Tonn introduced herself as a new engineer at DNREC's Shoreline and Waterway Management Section

Damaris reported that she will be going on maternity leave at the beginning of August and that all inquiries on DEMA's mitigation program should be sent to Loren Reed until her return.

Tim Sexton reported that formal DHSS Principal Planner Linda Popels is now in a new position and that he will be taking her place.

Additional Updates

Damaris opened up the floor to the attendees to provide any additional updates.

- Dave Carpenter, New Castle County Office of Emergency Management: Dave reported on the improvement of the County's Community Rating System classification from Class 8 to Class 6. He discussed the hard work that the County put into this and the flood insurance discounts residents will be eligible for.

- Kelly Valencik, Delaware Coastal Programs: Kelly reported on the Resilient Community Partnership. This partnership leverages federal funding provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to help Delaware communities improve their planning and preparation capabilities. The partnership is soliciting Letters of Interest from state, county, and municipal government entities within the State of Delaware to enter into a Resilient Community Partnership for projects that will support local resilience planning and adaptation activities in Delaware.

Adjournment

The July 10, 2019 Hazard Mitigation Council Meeting concluded at 11:00 am